

REMARKS

In the December 6, 2006 Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 3, 4, 10, 11 and 15-18 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and claims 6, 7, 13 and 14 were indicated as allowed. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the December 6, 2006 Office Action, Applicants have amended the claims to accept the indicated allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 3-7 and 9-20 are pending, with claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 15-18 being the independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication No. 60-16558 (Takaki et al.). Applicants have amended the claims to accept the indicated allowable subject matter. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 6, 7, 13 and 14 were indicated as allowed and claims 3, 4, 10, 11 and 15-18 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicants have amended claims 3, 4, 10, 11 and 15-18 to place them in independent form.

Appl. No. 10/534,698
Amendment dated January 25, 2007
Reply to Office Action of December 6, 2006


Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3-7 and 9-20 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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